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ABSTRACT

This publication includes 79 works of poetry and fiction by Kansas children ranging from age seven to twelve. The collection was sponsored in part by the Kansas Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts. (CC)

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Young Kansas Writers

Donald Stewart, Editor

Volume 63 April 1978 Number 3

An Affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English

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Forward

The writer strives to serve thought and feeling through the language. When he or she succeeds, the writer and the world have another true voice. We believe this collection honors that quest. To all the students and teachers whose efforts made this collection possible, we say thank you. We only regret that we did not have additional space to print more work by young Kansans. The Editors

Acknowledgements

The editors wish to thank the following teachers, for without their time and effort this publication would not have been possible: Joy Ansdell, Merrill Boudreaux, Nancy Converse, B. W. Coulson, Winnifred Geissler, Edwyna Gilbert, Pat Greene, Marilyn Haase, Mary McDonnell Harris,

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Young Kansas Writers is sponsored in part by the Kansas Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Editors

Heaven, Help Us All

Heaven, help the Lonely Student.
He stumbles through the hall.
He waits patiently for two to stop
kissing
holding hands
talking
and kissing
in front of his locker
He survives, I don't know how.

Heaven, help the Only Student.
She listens intently to the teacher's
faltering voice.
She places her books reverently into
her locker;
math, then
English,
history and
science.
She survives, I don't know how.

Heaven, help the teachers.
They need all the help they can get
to teach the
only, Lonely and themselves.
Heaven, help us all.

Mary K. Price, 8, Maize Junior High

To Be Human

To be a wolf
walk in shadows' hazy daydreams,
be windswept granite in heart and visage,
live grey and strike swiftly under cloud—
emotion only in your eyes.

To be a rat
skittering in hot, dark buildings,
be secret staring, muddy holes for eyes
and mouth, no interest in others
of your kind.

To be a lion
move slow and golden with the sun.
A river, unhurried but swift, flows
in your veins and in your ancestry—
you move for the movement.

To be human,
or all of these, know the shadows
of night, the dark of day. But most,
know the river that runs inside you,
and inside them all.

Laura Jackson, 11, Salina High South

THE RAIN BEGINS TO POUR

The rain begins to pour into my head,
My mind begins to swell and then
The thunder crashes and everything
Around is still and silent.
The tears begin to pour,
My heart begins to swell and
I fall asleep.

Susan Menninger, 9
Boswell Junior High (Topeka)

Lost Childhood

My yellow butterfly days
came to an end
when I asked why
and no one answered.

Alice Hattendorf, 12
Scott Community High

The Beating

The words lost their potency
so the hands took over and slapped
the message through.
I still think he's wrong
but I'll be quiet next time and think in my head
how foolish it is to go through life
without
living it.

Milt Allen, 11, Salina Central High

A BUTTERFLY'S WINGS

Its wings,
Are forever beating,
Continuous,
Yet graceful.
They float,
On the breeze,
And sail,
On the wind.
The wings,
They flutter.
They are,
Exceedingly beautiful
And each,
Split second,
Brings the same,
Breathless excitement,
As the last.
In the fresh, green Spring,
When the Earth,
Smells of dampness,
And freshness,
They are there.
In the hot summer,
When the sky,
glows with,
the brilliance,
of gold and bronze,
They are there,
In the cool,
Windy Autumn,
When the many leaves,
Of scarlett and Copper,
Release their beauty,
And fall to the ground,
They are there.
Oh, if only the beauty,
Of the shimmering wings,
Could bring,
Just a little color,
To the cold,
cold,
winter.

Amy Lignitz, 7
Manhattan Junior High

Gone Is the Magic

No more are there witches,
a troll, or a pixie.
No more are there people
going back to Dixie.

Gone are the rides
on an oriental train.
Gone are the friends
of a man named Twain.

Where is the tortoise
chasing the hare?
Where is the teacher
going up the down stair?

What happened to Marley
and the ghosts that he sent?
What happened to the other side
of mild-mannered Clark Kent?

Who is the giant
that Jack just slew?
Who ever read,
"Horton Hears a Who?"

Gone is the magic
to be used no more,
having been swept away
from the tired shore.

Floating by mermaids
and a poet name Lear,
Nobody anywhere
is shedding a tear.

Now it is floating
further out to sea.
But no one cares
'cause they're all watching T.V.

Bruce Frey, 9
Boswell Junior High (Topeka)

THE CARD DEALER

As a pom-pon girl, money becomes a lost friend. I needed money for material, name, shoes, camp—an endless list of things. We pom-pon girls made up our minds to do something about this expense; we decided to make a little cash by selling stationery.

We sent for sample packets and the catalogs of the CURRENT STATIONERY CO. On its arrival, I looked through my packet, reading all about my products—everything from cards of cuddly, cute animals and delicate flowers to brightly, decorated gift wraps and placemats. I was sure to make the ideal saleswoman. I would go into town, park some place, and walk door-to-door. I was determined to be a success. Next Saturday, November 5, would be my big day to see what kind of influence I had on people. I thought that if Saturday brought a lot of money, I could go into the business on my own.

My big day came. All the way into town I kept rehearsing the line I would use to spark interest in my products—"Hi, my name is Joan Engle. Would you be interested in some attractive stationery, or perhaps placemats to give as a gift?" It sounded simple enough to say, but I suffered from a bad case of nerves as soon as I got to town. After ten minutes of reassuring myself, I was ready to go, full of confidence.

The first doorbell I rang was answered by an old, gray-haired lady. She was slightly deaf, so I got a lot of practice saying my line. She invited me into an ancient, musty smelling, parlor room. The place was spotless, but the furniture had seen better days. As I sank to the floor in a huge easy chair, I took out my sample cards and notes. She looked at every sample and seemed quite interested. "Mmm," I thought, "what a way to start the day." I was sure I had a buyer here. But after about an hour of talking, or should I say yelling, I asked her what she would like.

She bluntly said, "I'm sorry, honey but I think I have all the stationery I need for awhile." She got up, limped over to a monstrous chest, pulled a drawer open, full of all sorts of stationery. I could see I wouldn't even be able to sell one box, so I left disappointed and hoarse.

No one was at home at the next three houses, but that didn't discourage me. At the fourth house a young, lively housewife invited me into her kitchen, where she was baking all sorts of scrumptous pastries. The atmosphere was completely different in this warm, spicy kitchen from that musty smelling parlor. She quickly looked through my booklet and selected a box of recipe cards. As I left the house, I was sure my voice was leaving me for good because I could just whisper.

Almost ready to give up because of my voice, I tried one more house. This one was crawling with kids. I was invited, well, more like pushed, into the house. The exhausted mother seemed glad to have a chance to sit down. Not long after I sat down, two little boys (about three and four) began crawling all over me. While I was trying to fend them off, another got hold of some sample cards. He soon made confetti out of them. After fifteen minutes of trying to keep kids off my back and out of my stationery, I sold a children's calendar. I rushed out of that house. I can just see that calendar in pieces after it's in the hands of those little monsters.

I walked slowly back to the car. My throat hurt, and I couldn't speak a word. I decided I wasn't cut out to be a card saleswoman. I was ready to hang up this business, but maybe if the other girls didn't have much luck either, we could try candles, or magazines, how about candy . . . ?

Joan Engle, 11, Chapman High

MR. ARTELO SLANERK

I first became acquainted with Mr. Slanerk in the August of 1974. I was walking through the main hallway of the UFCFTHB. UFCFTHB, if you are not already acquainted with the name, stands for the United Foundation For the Care and Feeding of Two-Headed Beings. You should see what suckers actually give money to things like us. And of course, since the foundation has not found any two-headed beings in all its years of existence, the staff (composed of me) divides up the funds among itself.

But anyway, as I walked down the corridor, I heard some strange noises emanating from the broom closet. Thinking that Fred, the janitor, had gone to sleep on the job again, I opened the door and looked in. Whom should I see but Artelo Slanerk?

I cannot remember what I first noticed about Mr. Slanerk. Perhaps it was the fact that all three of his ties clashed. Maybe it was that his galosh was on backwards. Then again, maybe that he had three heads, one leg, and a five inch navel.

Instantly, a thought struck my mind! What is a three-headed man doing in the broom closet of a foundation to protect two-headed beings? Two-headed beings in a foundation to protect two-headed beings is bad enough, without dragging another head into the matter! According to all rules of mathematics, a three-headed being should not even be *able* to come into the foundation! Everyone knows that three can't go into two! Naturally, I was outraged!

"Sir," I said to the being, "What are you doing in the broom closet of the USCFTHB?"

"Alas," said the trespasser, "I would wait in your lobby but for a habit I acquired during childhood."

As the being said that, a great curiosity arose within me as to what this habit could be, and I said,

"Well, my little twaddle-headed tri-brain, for the life of me I can't see how any childish habit could make one stand in a broom closet, amid the pails and mops, with three clashing ties."

"Well," said the treaspasser, "Ever since I was born, my parents kept me locked up in the cellar, and now I never feel quite at home when I'm not in at least a semi-dark room with articles to bump into."

"That'a all very well and good," I started up again, "but you still haven't told me your name or purpose for coming into the UFCFTHB."

"Why, I thought that that would be totally obvious, as to purpose, anyway," said the monopod. "I am here to claim all the comforts that your organization offers."

At this I was completely flabbergasted. How dare the strange being come into a building where he was not wanted, and demand that we give him aid meant for two-headed beings! The nerve of him made my blood boil!

So I said to the trespasser, "How dare you try to get a single farthing from my organization?"

"Now wait just one minute, there," said the tri-head. "Let's get one thing straight. Now," said he, "if you were to find a being with two heads, he would be heir to all the money that you have collected so far. Correct?"

"Correct," I replied.

"Well," said the monopod, "since I have at least two heads, then it seems perfectly obvious to me that I should have a right to it."

"Not so fast, there," said I. "You have at least one head, and you have at most three heads, so I don't see where the two come in, and, anyway, you surely don't expect me to give you several million dollars without even knowing your name, do you?"

The name," said the tri-head, "is Artelo Slanerk, and when you add up the least number of heads I have, and the most number of heads I have and divide the sum by the required amount of heads, you get the required amount exactly."

"I assure you," I said, "that the Judges in this state are all very bad figurers."

This left Artelo undaunted, and he replied, "Look at it this way: Since I have one and a half of the required number of heads, I should get one and half times all your funds."

With that, I shouted, "What! If I worked that way, I'd have to give every Tom, Dick, and Harry who came in here half the funds, and besides the foundation doesn't even have one and a half times all its money!"

A robbery, eh!?!" said he, "and I have a pretty fair idea who committed it, too! Farewell, sir," he said, "I'll have you know, I don't associate with embezzlers!"

And with that he stomped out.

Daniel Maxfield, 8, Manhattan Junior High

Confetti in the Air

Floating down so gracefully
Through the light blue sky
Until it reaches
the
ground.

Janice Hindman, 8
Minneola Junior High

MY STREET

Would you like to come with me,
Down my dead end street?
Would you like to come with me,
At least come take a peak.

Children play with rusted cars,
Sores cover their hands.
Politicians laugh and drink,
Drunk to all demands.

Greg Hoyt, 7
Manhattan Junior High

Human Nature

Some people do it,
and some people don't.
Some people will like it,
and some people won't.
Some people won't try,
and just turn it off.
Some people sit back,
and quite loudly scoff.
Some people are brave,
and get out and see,
If it's for them,
or if it's for me.

David Merritt, 9
Royster Junior High (Chanute)

A Christmas Memory, 1977

Picture a warm cozy kitchen with the tantalizing, fragrant aroma of baking peppernuts drifting through the air. The center of all the attention is a crock bowl full of chilled brown dough rich with nuts, spices, and raisins. Outside a blustery Kansas wind is blowing through the evergreens reminding everyone that it is time to choose their tree. Christmas is here!

I know it before I get home; the picture is already becoming clear in my mind. Hurrying up the walk, I burst into the kitchen, like popcorn exploding in a skillet, and shout, "It's time to bake peppernuts!" Sure enough, Mom has the same feeling, for a batch of golden brown nuggets is just popping out of the oven.

I begin rolling out the appetizing dough into long thin ropes, cutting these into half inch pieces, placing them on the cookie sheets, and checking the ovens. It is a busy, exciting time. As I place the hundreds of bite-sized pieces on the cookie sheets, I begin to wonder how many batches Mom has stirred up this year. For every two peppernuts I drop onto the sheet, I pop one into my mouth. Mom, noticing this says, "Christmas goodies made by you are the nicest gifts, so don't eat them all up!" Even though I sample several dozen, I can't deplete the pile. Before we are through, there are mounds of peppernuts on the table, enough to fill a large flour sack.

The highlight of our Yule activity is picking our tree. Now that the peppernuts are baked, we are ready to select THE TREE. It is always difficult to single out the precise one that we want. As we wander through the warehouse, we consider several choices. This one is too wide, that one is too skimpy, and the other one is much too short. Aren't there any that are just the right dimensions. Some years we have cut our own tree, but this year we finally purchase a giant sharp-needled fir. It is so tall it takes up the whole back seat of the car and part of the front.

After it stands in the warm house for awhile, it begins to give off a pungent perfume. The branches are outreaching like a child stretching his hands out for candy. They are also dense enough to hold a profusion of ornaments. This is very necessary because we add certain special decorations each year that signify some specific event. As we unpack the boxes, out come the stories behind each ornament, and my mind is flooded with memories of past years. As I place these keepsakes on the tree boughs, I am making memories for next year. When I step back to survey our shimmering glimmering tree, I see unforgettable occasions hanging there. Although some of the ornaments have been purchased, many of them have been handcrafted by my family or friends. As we decorate the tree, we busily munch peppernuts. The gallon jar seems to empty faster than it filled.

Finally, the last icicle is hung on the tree, and there are only crumbs in the bottom of the cookie jar. As I survey the tree from top to bottom, I begin to wonder how it looked before it was cut. Maybe it had shining icicles sparkling in the sun and moonlight instead of twinkling tinsel. Soon though, these thoughts vanish as we light the candles and switch the tree lights on. Now, as we relax by the glowing fire, we feel that all the effort that went into baking and decorating is worth it. There are still many more yule activities to come, but making peppernuts and selecting a tree are traditions for every early December. They are two things that bring my family together for the start of a joyous Christmas.

Elizabeth Wulf, 8, Santa Fe Middle School (Newton)

MEDITATING

We stopped in a little town in Ohio. It was no more than a wide place in the road. We ate lunch in a diner called "Ethel's Place." I was hungry, tired, and glad to rest for awhile.

Thomas Robert Wade was with me; Thomas Wade whom I'd known for ages and lived with for three years; Thomas Robert Wade who was "such a bright young man with quite a future ahead of him."

Tom was not tired. His beautiful mouth was smiling. His beautiful hair was uncombed. His beautiful chin had razor stubble. He sat there beautifully chewing his chicken salad sandwich.

Tom was talking about the history of Ohio. I was watching the newlywed couple in the next booth. They seemed very much in love. Irony, I thought.

"Are you listening?" Tom asked.

I mumbled something affirmative.

"You seem to be a million miles away," he said.

Only wishful thinking, Tom.

As he ate, I watched his face. When he chewed, the muscles in his jaw stood out. When he talked, his eyebrows moved up and down.

". . . that's how this town was named . . ."

Wonderful, I thought. Tom, why don't you let your hair grow a little? It's too short. I remember when we first started dating. I thought it was too short then, too. I've never told you this, but I don't like short hair on men.

". . . in Cincinnati we'll be able to see the place where . . ."

Will we? That's terrific, but I don't like Cincinnati. No, I don't know why. I used to like it. I lived there for awhile. Isn't that where we met, Tom? But now I hate the place. Why? I wonder.

"Angela, you'd better hurry. We should be leaving soon." Thomas Robert Wade glanced at his L.E.D. quartz crystal.

Tom, you are a clock-watcher, I thought. I hadn't noticed this quirk of yours before. Why does it bother me so much?

"Angela, aren't you feeling well?" Thomas Robert Wade seemed sincerely concerned.

Yes, Tom, I thought, I feel well enough . . . considering. Considering that for the last three days I've been cramped in a green Toyota, journeying across Nevada, Colorado, Missouri, Illinois, and the ever-eventful Kansas. Considering that I don't even want to see New York. Yes, Tom, I feel great.

"My cousin, Al, lives in New York. We really should stay with him while we're there. He is family, after all."

Yes, Tom, after all, he is family. Even though you hate Al's guts and his kids drive you bananas. Even though he lives in a rat infested section of the Bronx and his wallpaper is pealing. Yes, after all that, he is family. Your sense of obligation stinks.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"I guess I am."

"Well, then, come, my love, and we'll be leaving."

Yes, we'll be leaving. You and your love. Me and my . . . my what? Love? Is this love? If so, hate must be the pits.

I picked up my purse. I wonder, I thought, when I stopped loving you, Thomas Robert Wade. Was it last summer in Florida? I hated Florida. No, it was before that. It was . . . could it be I never loved you?

"You wait here while I get the car," Tom said.

Yes, you get the car. You take the car to New York. I'll take the bus back to L.A. So long, Thomas Robert Wade, it's been great knowing you.

Well," called a voice from a green Toyota, "hop in. I think we can make New York City by tonight."

"Yes, won't Al be surprised?" I said as I 'hopped in'.

Lisa Knudsen, 10, Tonganoxie High

THE ROAD BACK

Dwelling upon my past sorrows,
Looking ahead to brighter tomorrows,
Somehow, I lost my way.
Lost it among stars, and tears,
Lost it in the pain of my growing-up years.
Somehow, I lost my way.

Yesterday, expecting it least,
I found the answer in a falling leaf.
Somehow, it had lost its way.
Allowing the storms of life to assail me,
I allowed the winds of time to take me,
And, permitted myself to be lost.

Lori Baker, 12
Labette County High (Altamont)

A THOUGHT

Soaked from the rain,
I looked into the dark night.
And as the moon shone down upon the trees,
My heart became lonely
With the memory of you.

Lauri Hanson, 9
Manhattan Junior High

Midnight Ballet

The wind hums a tune
While he and his friends, the trees,
Dance in the moonlight.

Karla Classen, 8
Minneola Junior High

The Adventures of Space Mouse

A huge explosion rocked Gotham City. That dastardly criminal, Dick the Brick, was at it again. He had almost single-handedly robbed every bank in the state. The unaware Joe Snow was shooting eight ball in his mansion on the outskirts of Gotham City when all of a sudden his phone rang viciously. His butler, Chive., answered it. It was the commissioner. (In reality Joe Snow is the hero.) He said, "Space Mouse, Dick the Brick has just robbed the bank! Come quick!" So our mild-mannered millionaire rushed to his study, pushed the button behind the statue of King Louis IX and the bookcase slid back. Snow and his cousin, John Rhane, rushed towards the poles behind the bookcase. Once they got to them, they slid down until they got to the bottom. But a drastic change had taken place. Joe Snow was no longer himself, and neither was John Rhane. Somehow both of them had been mystically transformed into "Space Mouse" and "Electra Mole." They both rushed toward the "mouse mobile," jumped in, and took off towards the commissioner's office. Once they reached his office, the commissioner briefed them, and they were off.

The first place they looked was the Silver Donkeyshoe, a frequented hiding place of Dick the Brick. He was not there. They went from place to place looking for him, but he was nowhere to be found. At about ten o'clock they were in the Sweet Beginning, a very popular nightclub in Gotham. Out front they saw what they thought was the villain's car. So they went inside and to their surprise there he was, and he gave up without a fight. They took him to the commissioner's office for questioning. But on the way Dick the Brick let some knockout gas out of his flower on the lapel of his jacket. And having a gas mask built into the other lapel, he was not harmed.

LATER—

Space Mouse and Electra Mole were tied up over a vat of acid. But aren't we all lucky that Space Mouse has sharp teeth that are good for biting through rope. And also, mice are very quiet so he sneaked up on Dick the Brick and shot him with his demagnetizing ray gun. But it only stunned him momentarily. And aren't we lucky that Electra Mole has good teeth for digging. He dug them out and used his ESP to get them out of the jungle. Once they turned in Dick the Brick, they got back to their game of eight ball which Electra Mole was winning. And they all lived happily ever after.

Joe McCune, 8, Eisenhower Junior High (Topeka)

the seagull

his wings kiss the waves
as they lap up against the sandy shore
he speaks to the sky
as he sails to the clouds
once again

Marti Priest, 9
Boswell Junior High (Topeka)

BLITZEN GETS JEALOUS

You know Dasher and Dancer, Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid, Donner and Rudolph, but do you recall, the least famous reindeer of all?

Well, enough musical nostalgia. I'll get right down to telling you why Blitzen was jealous. Just because he had a normal nose, he didn't have a smash hit T.V. special, or a song about him. Something that bothered him most of all, was that he was always hitched up last. He never got to lead the reindeer like Rudolph or Dasher or Dancer. In the poem, "Twas the Night Before Christmas", Santa called his name last and because people always get bored when you run through all the reindeer names, Blitzen always gets lost in a bombardment of yawns.

One day, Santa was talking about Blitzen with Mrs. Claus. "You know", said Santa with a sigh, "I've been worried about Blitzen, he never eats his Purina Deer Chow."

"Yes, and the salesman said that any deer would gobble it right up! Salesmen will take advantage of anyone these days!" exclaimed Mrs. Claus.

There was a long silence, then Santa said, "I think that I'll have a talk with the poor thing and see if I can find out what's bothering him."

"You can try", said Mrs. Santa glumly, "but I don't think he'll talk very much. He's been keeping to himself a lot lately."

Santa tramped through the falling snow and thought to himself, "Three days until Christmas Eve and Blitzen is under the weather. I've got to do something! I've got seven other reindeer, but it sure wouldn't be the same without Blitzen . . . poor Blitzen."

Suddenly, as if by a miracle, Santa got an idea. "I'll make Blitzen laugh. All reindeer feel good when they're laughing." So Santa went to the stable. There he saw a log-stick lying on the ground, "I'll just trip over it and Blitzen will laugh at my clumsiness!" Santa went over to Blitzen's stall and tried to cheer him up, then as he walked away, he fell down. Santa looked up at Blitzen. The deer was giving Santa a don't-try-it-because-it-won't-help look.

Just then one of the elves came in with some horrible news — Rudolph's nose had burned out!

"Well" Santa exclaimed, "we'll have to make do. Blitzen, do you feel up to leading the sleigh tomorrow night?"

Blitzen didn't have to answer. He was over the wall of his stall and flying around the stable.

"Ho, Ho, Ho! Save all that energy for Christmas Eve!"

Rick Barth, 8, West Elementary (Belleville)

Lather, Rinse, Repeat

It was a momentous day for me. I was to be permitted to take my first bath alone. I was a proud six-year-old. I splashed and played in the water for an hour before my mother shouted, "Hurry up, Jeff, there's others waiting."

I proceeded by washing with the soap until I was whistling clean. Then came the part I dreaded most. I reached for the bottle of shampoo and read the directions: Rinse, Lather, and Repeat.

I started with the required handful and proceeded to lather and rinse. Then I

followed the directions and started all over again. It wasn't until after four lathers, rinses and repeats that my mother arrived and explained the real meaning.

Jeff Kathrens, 12, Holton High

Description of a Man

He still looks a lot like the ancient picture I hold. But like the paper of the picture, his edges are yellow and crumpled. His once jet black hair is silver at the edges, but still combed in the same becoming manner. His smooth, virgin complexion now is sometimes rough with unshaven stuble. I notice in his face many wrinkles, that have developed over the years. He is not tall, 5' 9", but the once very thin and muscular body, shows signs of a roll around the middle. The mischievious, onery eyes have changed, for now they look at me through glasses, and they glow with warmth, joy, and love. As I study the photo, I say to myself, "Yes, the years have changed this man, but something remains the same. I cannot place my finger on what tells me that he has the same boyish spirit. Is it the way he acts? Or is it something I can see?"

"Listen to this," he says as he looks up from his paper. Then he reads an amusing article, at which we both chuckle. Then I realize that it was his smile and his laugh that I was looking for. The smile in the picture is the exact one he used just now. The beauty of his laughter is what makes my father's character.

Julie Thomas, 10, Hayden High School (Topeka)

NOT THE RIGHT AGE

When I ask my mom
if I can go to the store, she says,
"Not today—don't bother me anymore.
When I ask my mom
if I can drive a car, she says,
"Now just how old do you think you are?"
If my room is really a mess, she'll say,
"You're much too old to let it look like this."
Then if I get really mad and yell, she'll say,
"You're much too old to act this way."
You know, I wonder if I'll ever be the right age.

Carla Parry, 7, Manhattan Junior High

The Attic

My mind is full of cobwebs,
music, Sunday hats, and baby beds,
memories of all that I have seen,
and hopes for what I have yet to see,
Birthdays, roses, ten cent engagement rings,
and other precious things.

Lisa Jones, 9
Royster Junior High (Chanute)

I HAD A DREAM LAST NIGHT

I had a dream last night,
Of a place with mountains high,
Snow-capped and jagged—
Their cruelty hidden by the snow.
There were perfect Christmas trees,
And pine trees,
Standing next to barren aspen.
A wild place,
A barren one,
With a stream frozen in time.
The sun caught the crystal of a waterfall.
I was standing alone upon a hill,
Looking into the frozen depths of the stream.
The wind blew all around me.
I was cold.
The wind blew me into the river.
Down the canyon I went.
The canyon narrowed.
Ahead, an ice bridge—
Foot prints of friends still showed on it.
They brought remembrances of a summer day,
So long ago,
When I was happy.
We laughed back then.

Kim Medina, 12, Salina High South

And Maybe Someday . . .

He sits there boldly, legs dangling, fingers fidgeting, upon his wooden throne.

He views his inattentive audience with concern, but then shakes his head as if to say, "Oh well."

The only thing barricading him from the others is maturity and independent freedom. A car, a family, a paycheck, a college education, and the advantage of being on the other side of the throne, not seated in the semi-thrones shaped like pretzels.

Well, he was there long ago seated in those pretzels and probably thinking the same thing.

And maybe someday I'll be sitting on that wooden throne, dangling my legs, fidgeting my fingers and being attentive to an inattentive audience, and saying to myself, "Oh well."

And maybe someday I'll be sitting on that throne with the responsibility of a house, a car, and bills hovering around me. And also holding the measly responsibility of educating them, so they may sit and dangle. Oh well.

Rosalie Eisland, 9, Boswell Junior High (Topeka)

Tuxedo Blue

Tuxedo Blue is my funny little kitty. He lives in my garage. Yesterday, while paying him a visit, he was telling me about some of his latest plans. Today Tux is figuring on becoming a pro disc jockey. Think that's a biggy? You should hear a few others.

"But, Tux," I interrupt, "being a good disc jockey takes work. Not every little kitty can take the competition. Besides, what about joining the Marines and playing alto sax in the Marching Band?"

"Aw," he pouts, "that was yesterday. I'm a tough cookie. I can take it. Us cats gots nine lives anyway."

Refilling his bowl with Little Friskies, I asked Tuxedo when his new Harley Davidson was coming in. I say its never gonna get here, but Tux just tells me to wait and see.

I remember trying to talk him out of running away to Hollywood to become a TV star. That was something else! I'm thinking about limiting his TV hours. I mean, staying up till three o'clock every night just to see Morris on that stupid nine lives commercial. See, Morris is his idol. Talk about star-struck, Tux actually asked me how he'd look with yellow tiger stripes! I finally did convince Tux to stay with me. I told him ABC didn't need him to boost their ratings.

Looking at him sprawled on the floor, I giggled. "Tuxedo Blue, you're too much!" Giving me his little grin, he jumped on my lap and started to purr.

Michelle McCloud, 8, Berean Academy (Elbing)

My Dollhouse

When I was just a little kid,
Not more than three or four,
My daddy brought home a dollhouse,
With a little swinging door.

I'd play with it for hours on end,
and sometimes I wouldn't eat,
because in that beautiful dollhouse,
all my dreams and hopes could meet.

When school time came rolling around,
And my "childhood" was done,
Playing with dolls and houses and such
Wasn't *really* all that fun.

And when I reached my early teens
And my interests began to grow,
I just had to redecorate my dingy old room,
And that dollhouse just had to go!

But now that I'm a woman,
With an immaculately clean kitchen that gleams,
I wish I were a kid again,
Alone with my dollhouse and dreams.

Leslie Bokelman, 8, Manhattan Junior High

SEYMOUR STRIKES BACK

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Seymour, and I belong to the biological sub-order Ophidia, better known as snakes. More specifically, I'm a cottonmouth, and like most of my race, I've been exposed to every imaginable derogatory comment. All my life, I've patiently accepted (with gritted fangs) these insults that have been directed toward me and other members of my species. That is, until today.

I've just returned from a reunion with my brother Sam, who lives in a herpetarium at some zoo in Balboa Park. While I visited with him, we were subjected to the most humiliating experience we've ever known. A group of adolescents touring the zoo taunted us with their mock hissing, name-calling, and continuous rapping on Sam's glass home. Normally, I disapprove of violence, but I would have loved to bestow those kids with a piece of fang. Even though this incident occurred over a week ago, I'm still furious about it. I refuse to bear these types of ugly remarks any longer.

I suppose all the snake's troubles date back to the time of Adam and Eve. After they had eaten of the fruit they weren't to touch, God asked the couple why they sinned. Since they were afraid of God's Wrath, they did what all humans in trouble do—pass the buck onto another person. Adam cast the blame on Eve, and she insisted that the serpent was at fault. Ever since then, we've worn the badge of infamy.

In history and literature we have been disgraced by men. Saint Patrick won his renown for driving all snakes from Ireland. Our reputation as the villain was bolstered by the fact that Cleopatra committed suicide with the aid of an asp. Even Jesus degraded us when he called the Pharisee a "brood of vipers."

We have been the victims of a great injustice for thousands of years. Mankind has always considered us to be the symbol of evil and disgust. Words and phrases downgrading us have been coined to express these feelings. A "snake in the grass" is a secret, treacherous enemy; a mental hospital is dubbed a "snake pit;" and a deceitful person is described as "snaky." Traits in a despicable human being are associated with the physical characteristics of adders. Examples of this include the liar (who speaks with a "forked" tongue) and the stereotyped criminal (who possesses slit eyes, as we do).

In conclusion, I believe now is the time for man to remove this brand that taints vipers. I know that if humans eliminate this stigma of evil, they will find that, generally, our hiss is worse than our strike.

Cindy Boor, 11, Trinity High (Hutchinson)

NIGHT WOLF

Standing still,
As the sun goes down.
He will go seeking a silent
eternity.
Away from the world,
at least for the night.
Dreaming of rabbits and field mice.

Kim Vererka, 7
Boswell Junior High (Topeka)

Dark Clouds

Dark clouds rumble by,
Churning over towns,
Saying "Beware" to the countryside,
Floating and floating,
Into the horizon,
And then they are GONE!

Scott Downing, 8
Minneola Junior High

THE ENDLESS HIKE

My aching feet plunged heavily through the piles of dry leaves burying the dead pale grass. I often pivoted about the area trying to avoid old tree stumps, logs, and the thick growth of trees. Suddenly flying forward, I attempted to stabilize myself after stumbling over a large twig. Being angry at the branch, I re-approached it, yet with a little more caution, stooped over and yanked it from under the protection of the leaves. I knew I could provide an adequate punishment for its misbehavior, so I examined its structure and realized it would be most suitable and welcomed to accompany me on my journey through the woods.

My walking cane guided me to a narrow, worn path which led by like a slithering snake. It was quite obvious that it rained here not long ago for at the water's edge, my weary legs were burdened with uprooting my planted feet from the tenacious mud. My stick converted into a crutch as it aided my escape from the quicksand. So I journeyed away from the trail and I lost all knowledge of my location. There I trembled as a prisoner of the aspens. Their tall white bodies guarded me; I took advantage of the pause and plopped down on the fluffy leaves and drowsed off into another world.

Slowly opening my heavy eyelids, I recognized the quickly sinking sun; its rays were forked by the numerous trees. It was late and night would be here shortly. The surrounding aspens didn't appear tall, but rather awkward now as I jumped up and went on my way.

But where? Where was I? Everything looked unfamiliar and dampness encircled the forest. I searched for some energy to strengthen myself in order to hurry along. I lost all sense of direction, but about fifty feet away, a barbed wire fence trimmed the edge of a clearing. It marked someone's property and civilization existed close by. I wandered to the fence and trailed downhill beside it.

Time dragged and it seemed like hours passed. I strained my eyes to observe the areas; it became harder and harder as blackness blended in with the forest. I had to accelerate my pace. With little hope I glanced about in order to recognize something, but nothing yet. Surely the fence would lead me somewhere.

Fear kept me going as I paraded onward. Instantaneously, I halted. That sound, the squeaky noise of rubbing galvanized iron plates echoed in the distance. The windmill was the sign of home, familiar grounds.

Julianne Cummings, 11, Trinity High (Hutchinson)

Killed

A black man
Was shot
In Memphis
At midnight
He was different

Dan Fink, 8
Manhattan Junior High

What's a Rabbit?

To me a rabbit is a small
soft free animal
Settling in a small child's arms
for both of them wanting
to be gentle to the other
Knowing only the past
and maybe not
the future.

Cindy Cochran, 8
Maize Junior High

Fear Not

I am not afraid
of Dogs
Just because they have
Sharp, jagged, yellow teeth
Showing through a snarl and a growl.

I am not afraid
of the night
Just because I saw
a shadow slither around a corner
into a dark alley.

I am not afraid
of heights
Just because I saw
a man fall and die
a horrible death.

I am not afraid
of the unknown
Just because the world
is filled with creepy crawlers
that sting, bite, and poison.

I am not afraid
of living
Just because the world
is a trap awaiting my mistakes
To make me trip and fall.

I am not afraid
I face each day
with my eyes opened wide
Straying not to either side of the line
Between reality and fantasy.

Gerri Hettenbach, 11, Chapman High

My world

I have a world of
my very own,
Where I have often
lived and grown,
My world is full
of fantasy,
And full of lots of
things to see,
My world is very
sweet and nice,
To me it seems
like paradise,
I have a school
in my own world,
Where everything
is all unfurled.
I think that if I had
a choice,
I'd say it in this
kind of voice.
I want my world
to be the best,
Of all that have to
pass the test.
My world is where
I'm going to live,
Until I have no
more to give.
To this is all I
have to say
Come join me in
my world today.

Terese BonJour, 7
Ferndale High School

Tapestries of Life

My life is like my shadow,
fleeting on fog-velvet paws,
passing through the walls and fading before your eyes,

interwoven in life's tapestries—
threadbare carpets, standing in
between the Threatening Darkness, and my shivering soul.

Trudi Beckman, 9, Junction City Junior High

Down and Out

In the beginning, National Forensics League created the Orators and the Extempers. Lo! They differed greatly—that the one might not participate in the other's event without risk of sanity.

Though mentally endangered, there I sat, quivering, in the Official National Forensics League Extemporaneous Speaking Preparation Room, waiting to draw three topics from amongst the worst stories ever to disgrace the back pages of *Time, Newsweek,* and *U.S. News and World Report*. Thereupon, I would choose one and repair to my chair, there to prepare in half an hour one four-to-seven minute speech that I would deliver without benefit of notes.

My oration, "The Politics of Oil Slicks," was going down the drain for various reasons, the foremost being that I was shaking like a leaf in anticipation of my extemp speech. After talking with one of my first-round judges, I learned that another reason for my receiving a "down" that round was that the girl preceding me had been so voluptous that no one heard my speech. No bias amongst *these* judges!

The time arrived, and I barely walked to my doom. Always quick on the draw, I snatched three topics and began examining them. First—Gary Gilmore. I couldn't put any life into that topic. Second—? Never heard of it. A definite nonspeech. Third—Cuban relations. There it was, a topic I actually knew something about. I returned the first two topics to the envelope and myself to my table.

At my table, I began to assimilate my knowledge of Cuba. I'd seen Havana cigars—usually made in Mexico. In history class, we'd been dealing with the various laws that had tied Cuba to the U.S. from the Spanish-American War until the Forties. I had read *Che' Guevara's Bolivian Diaries* and *Guerrilla Warfare*.

The next question was whether to support resumed relations or not. I was in favor of such action and immediately dropped all mention of Che' and guerilla warfare. I then began to attempt to tie the remnants of my knowledge into a speech with semblance of continuity. My basic intent was to give a history of relations and be somewhat serious about the whole matter.

With this outline in mind, I made my way into the hall, where I hoped to find a friendly wall to talk to. Unfortunately, they were all occupied, so I settled for a kindly-looking door. I dodged it as it opened and decided that maybe a tree would be more attentive.

Outside, I gave my speech to a couple that weren't as attentive as I had hoped (they rustled a good deal). I then set about finding my room.

Upon arriving at my room, I found that I could touch the opposing walls with my outstretched arms. It contained three judges, myself, and a timekeeper sitting on the piano. The *piano*? I knew it would be a long four minutes.

I began. The judges looked bored. As I wondered if I were talking to three mannikins, I decided I should say something cute to awaken their interest. I began extolling on the benefits of Havana cigars. It worked! One of them nearly appeared human!

"After all," I summed up, "Cigars are Cuba's most important export, aside from Floridians." The judges now made it certain that they were truly human—they look disgusted. I felt disgusted. The piano was indifferent.

With heavy heart, I backed out the door. I knew that if I got two "downs" in a category, I would be out of that event. I felt rather put out, at any rate.

After completing my second round of this agony, I was entirely out—both events. I couldn't understand it. I was so *sure* the piano would give me a good ranking!

Thane Doss, 12, Pittsburg High

We're Having THAT For Breakfast?

"What are we having for breakfast, Mom?"

"Some milled rice with niacinamide, pyrodoxine hydrochloric, folic acid, and some milk and sugar."

At the moment you're most likely thinking that only a Ph.D. in English could pronounce it and only a doctor could digest it! But all it really is, is snapping, crackling, popping Rice Krispies! That's simple, right?

Although you may not be aware of it, your grocery shelf is full of products that contain ingredients such as those. You consume them every day, whether you realize it or not.

For instance, if you are making some hot chocolate, you're stirring up a mighty weird brew! You're warming yourself up with a mixture of tricalcium phosphate, sodium iron pyrophosphates, and cocoa processed with alkali. It may sound rather replusive, but it's very delicious!

In the meantime, after all of that, your stomach is growling for some corn, salt, onion, disodium insonate, disodium guanylate, and BHA and BHT. This list of verbiage is otherwise known as Dorito chips!

As of now, you've literally consumed on entirely new vocabulary! But, now you're going to top it off!

Now you're going to whip up some Dream Whip. You'll be blending propylene glycol monostearate, sodium silcoaluminate, acetylated monoglycerides and hydroxilated soybean lecithin into a light, fluffy and taste-tempting topping.

If after you've read this, you're afraid to face something you can't even spell, then why not try something from Mother Nature? At least you can pronounce "apple"!

Denise L. Balzer, 9, Boswell Junior High (Topeka)

OPPOWORDS

Match the states on the left with their oppo-states on the right.

Canada	Obyeo
Alaska	Altella
Illinois	Marywater
Mississippi	Hitissippi
Missouri	Theydaho
New Hampshire	Ninessee
Ohio	Jarada
Oregon	Metah
Pennsylvania	Mistersouri
Utah	Old Hampshire
Florida	Outdiana
Tennessee	Wellinois
Washington	Orecome
Maryland	Wallida
Indiana	Dryingounce

Mitchell Leggs, 8
Junction City Jr. High

Pizza

gooey, rich
steaming, tantalizing, pleasing
Italian Pasta — Calories Cholesteral
burning, tricking, filling
messy, fattening
Pound Pie

Julie Thomas, 10
Hayden High (Topeka)

JOHN DOE

I first saw the man at about 9:30 p.m. I had been waiting for my friend to arrive on the 9:07 from Boston, but the heavy snowstorm had delayed all flights. The man strolled into the waiting area with absolutely no moisture on his outer garments, which would suggest that he had been inside for quite some time. He took up a seat right next to mine and put on the facial expression he was to retain the entire time I was in contact with him.

The man wore a black derby, a navy-blue all-weather coat, and small rubber coverings for his black wingtips. His hair was neatly trimmed, his nails neatly manicured. Everything about this man was so boringly typical that he wouldn't even stand out in a crowd of three. His plastic expression was usual, too. It was not exactly happy, but at the same time it was not exactly unhappy either. The corners of his mouth were not pulled appreciably either up or down. His eyes had sort of a distant, glassy stare, as if he were looking at something far away, possibly far in distance, possibly far away in time.

After having read everything provided by the airline (mostly promotional brochures) I made a desperate attempt at conversation with the man, who happened to be the only other human nearby. "Waiting for someone special?" I asked. "No," said the man without ever breaking that disturbing gaze.

Now my curiosity was really aroused. Why was this man sitting so patiently in an airport with a raging blizzard outside when he expected no one to greet him? Maybe he has no family, I thought. Perhaps he has no friends either. What a sorrowful man! Now feeling a degree of pity, I offered him some candy. He politely refused, but he broke that icy stare and thanked me for my generosity.

I decided that nothing was to be gained by involving myself any further with this man, so I sank down in the uncomfortable chair provided by United Airlines and prepared myself for a long wait.

My friend finally arrived at 2:30 a.m. We shook hands and made our way to the baggage claim area. Curious, I looked around to catch a glimpse of the man. I saw him look at the flight listings, jot something down in a little notebook, and take off in the direction of Gates 09-19.

As I lay down and tried to sleep that night, my mind kept wandering back to the man in the airport waiting area. Who was he? Where was he from? Where was he going? Did he have a job? Where did he live? I found myself disturbed by an insignificant man who had come from nowhere, passed by my life, and returned to nowhere.

Jerry Herbel, 12, Hutchinson High

WHAT IS PURPLE?

Purple is a time
in the middle of my soul,
It's the sunset jetting in the western sky,
In the dark I lie in the purple of my thoughts,
The meadows of my life are filled with
purple sounds
Gliding past me into the future.

Margaret d'Wolf, 7, Manhattan Junior High

WATER IN THE WELL WITHIN ME

The night in its darkness fell,
Like a great satin blanket.
Its moon an opal,
Reflecting dew-drops of light within itself.
Like eyes of a trillion elves
The stars blinked at me . . .
And I shivered.
It was all too real.
A cold aloneness . . . an emptiness,
Penetrated my soul.
Wind blew through the pines,
And I was scared . . . for I was small.
Water flowed from my eyes
Not tears, but the crystals of time.
My fear . . . held open my eyes.
I was farther from myself than I'd ever been
But my fears and doubts
Like my footprints trailed behind me—
I found myself outside
Looking in
And I became rigid
For I realized
I wasn't alive in a sense of being,
But a soul on a journey into the depth
Of my self-created space.

Angie Howard, 11, Chapman High

Winter Approaches

Bare trees at sunset
Make a black lacy pattern
Against the gold sky

Elizabeth Wulf, 8
Santa Fe Middle School (Newton)

MOODS

A green walnut tree
whistles as the wind passed by;
a sad guitar plays softly.

Mark Phillips, 12, Abilene High

SUMMER DAWN

The grass is wet with morning
dew, the hot and sticky kind
and bird's and insect's low pitched buzz
blend into a rhyme,
the hot air flows,
a cool breeze blows,
separating all the night
for a child is near, a special child
it is the child of light
and as she flies into the sun upon
her milk white fawn
she leaves behind her
quietly, the early summer dawn.

Betteanne Iandola, 7, Manhattan Junior High

The Hunt

Slowly, gently, I eased her back onto the sofa, wrapping my arms around her, I patiently, tenderly, planted a wet luscious kiss upon her firm moist lips. Suddenly I felt a vicious finger gouging into my shoulder blade, bringing me out of my ecstatic dream world and back to reality.

An enormous figure of a man was looming over the bed. My father, grumbling, growling, and yelling, all at once he said, "Time to get up, it's five o'clock."

Now, I'm a reasonable young man and I was going to say, "But, Father, dear, why do you wish me to get up out of bed at this ungodly hour?" but it came out more like "What the hell are you rousting me out of the damn sack this early in the morning for, old man?" Then it hit me, no not my dad, but the reason my dad was getting me up so early. Today I was to become a man. I was to fulfill the ancient ritual of stepping from boyhood into manhood. I was going to compete in "the hunt." And upon doing so, became a man.

I kind of dripped out of the bed and stepped onto the hard ice-cold floor and made my way to the shower.

On the way back to my room I met my father, without even glancing at me he grumbled, "Dress warm, it's 6 below outside with 11 inches of snow." Now if that doesn't make your spine tingle, nothing will. Back in my room I began to dress for "the hunt." First three pairs of long-johns, then four flannel shirts, two pair of levi blue jeans, and to top it all, a pair of long coveralls.

My father had just finished his bacon and eggs breakfast when I got to the table. In not less than ten minutes I learned my first lesson about hunting. As I had finished my first bowl of post toasties I began to sweat, by the end of my second bowl, my body was on fire. It was a feeling much like the time I was locked in the sauna room for two panic stricken hours. Off they came, coveralls, flannel shirts, blue jeans, all in a rapid, wild frenzy, and finally my long-johns. I'm not one to believe in bad omens, but this little incident couldn't have been a good one.

I had just managed to finish my breakfast when my father came and said, "Let's go." I quickly put my clothes back on, grabbed my hat, gloves, and last but not least, my gun.

Father was not joking about the weather. It was indeed very windy and cold out. Our bird dog, Ben, was already in the back of our truck; it's strange how dedicated bird dogs are. All they have to look forward to is running around in the snow sniffing the air for the scent of a bird. Now it might be worth it if they got to eat the bird after the kill, but they don't, so why do they do it? I asked my father, he simply replied, "Because it's a bird dog." I guess his answer will have to do for now.

The truck plowed its way through the snow and got us to the hunting spot. I pulled my cap on, loaded my gun, and stepped out into the snow. The cold, frosty air stung at my face like an angry hornet.

We began to trudge through the snow, our bird dog doing his job of sniffing around. For the first time I began to notice how extraordinarilly beautiful the surrounding landscape looked—the sun creeping up over the horizon, the tree tops glistering with ice, and the ground blanketed with a thick layer of snow.

I thought what a beautiful setting in which to perform our morbid deed, killing animals who inhabited this breathtaking countryside.

We had walked a couple of miles. My face was frozen numb, my fingers seemed dead. I could only mumble a few slurred words for my lips wouldn't move. We were almost ready to give it up for the day when suddenly Ben froze, lifted one leg and shot his tail in the air, and pointed his nose into a clump of brush.

My father eased forward slowly, slowly until he was a few feet from the brush. A red-necked pheasant came roaring out of the bush. I raised my gun and pulled the trigger. The bird fluttered, flew a few yards further, then plummeted to the ground.

My heart was bursting with joy as I ran towards the bird. But at the sight of it my breast fell. It was lying there, fluttering away its last breath. My father ran over, picked it up, twirled it around, and ripped its head viciously off. Blood spurted all over the white velvet snow. I decided then and there that this entrance to manhood was not for me.

Ron Dreiling, 11, Chapman High

Excalibur

"My friend,"
Asked I,
"Why do you ream
Flesh with your
Blood-emblazoned
sword?"

Is it unrequited love?
Or a vengeance so great
Death only
Can cease your cause?

He looked up
And wiped
His hands.

"It is what I do best."

David Whalen, 12
Bishop Miege High (Mission)

Untitled

When you've had something
for a long time,
And then you feel it slowly
slipping away,
Let go of it gently.
Give it a chance
To grow somewhere else,
before it dies
Completely.

Kathy Clark, 11
Sacred Heart High (Salina)

Greed

Greed is the color green
It smells like quarters, dimes and nickels in the palm of your sweaty hand
It sounds like the jingling of loose change in a pocket
It tastes of copper on your tongue
It feels like the crunch of a crisp new dollar bill in your hand

Shellie Franz, 8, Santa Fe Middle School (Newton)

I Feel A Whole Lot Better

"You want to swing, Ellen? Here let me strap you in. "The young girl placed her tiny sister in the swing in their backyard. "Wee," she gave her a slight push, isn't that fun?"

"Theresa!" The girl's friend called out to her and ran up carrying two dolls.

"Hi, Jenny."

"Wanna play Barbies?" She held out her dolls.

"I have to watch my sister." The girl gave her another push.

"She can play, too." Jenny put in.

"She's just a baby, but I'll play." Theresa picked the brunette Barbie and sat down in the grass.

"My doll's name is Patty. She's a movie star." Jenny ran over and placed her doll in the birdbath. "She's going swimming."

"Well," said Theresa with a sneer, "My doll is going swimming in a river!" She ran with doll in hand to a tiny creek several yards from the backyard.

"So is mine." Jenny flew behind her. After about an hour of running and climbing trees, Jenny gathered her dolls and started for home.

"We'll finish tomorrow," yelled Jenny as she skipped away.

"Good," Theresa shouted back, "My doll is just getting out of the hospital in time to get married!"

"Bye."

Theresa ran up through the yard and stopped two feet shy of the door. She made a quick about-face to see an empty baby swing staring at her.

"Ellen!" she whispered under her breath. "Ellen!"

She ran to the swing and searched it as though suspecting her sister had fallen into it.

"Ellen!" she said more loudly and glanced back at the house to make sure her mother would not see her in frantic search.

She imagined her mother calling out from the screen window over the sink, "Theresa! Time for lunch. Bring your sister in, too."

Theresa turned toward the creek and a chill ran up her spine.

"Ellen, Ellen." She thrashed about in the long-stemmed weeds.

"She couldn't have gone far," she thought to herself and splashed about in circles in the rocky creek. In an effort to search the area from above, the young girl mounted a huge oak and began her ascent. The rough bark scratched her tender skin and she fell to the ground upon reaching for the third branch. Her jeans had ripped through in the knees. Beads of blood appeared on the broken skin of her knee. She began her climb again and reached twenty feet up. The first thing to catch her eye was a small bundle near the side of the creek.

"Ellen!" she shrieked and bounded down the tree without a thought. She headed down the stream in the direction of the bundle she had seen. Moss-covered stones sent her cascading into the cool brook water and her palms were pierced by jagged rocks on the bottom. After pulling herself up and heading on, she soon reached the saturated bundle and picked it up. Its folds gave way as she lifted it and she held in her hands a worn blanket.

"Theresa!" her mother called through the screen of the kitchen window, "Lunch is ready."

She searched around one more brisk time and started toward the house.

"Theresa!" her mother greeted her by the door. "What on earth have you been doing?!"

"Playing." She hung her head and stared at the floor.

"I'll say you were playing! You left your sister unattended and I had to bring her inside!"

Her head jerked up and she saw her little sister innocently sucking her thumb. She could've killed her.

Linda Funk, 10, Hayden High (Topeka)

REINCARNATION

First life, then death
Then spirits, that crept
To haunt, the place
That made, him face
The death, that led
To another life ahead

Kelly Denise, 9
Tonganoxie High

Tornadoes

Tornadoes
whirl through cities
across lone praries
and through silent forests
like
a huge whirlpool
a vacuum cleaner
and a giant spinning top
disappearing
into the clouds.

Kevin Wright, 9
Roosevelt Junior High (Coffeyville)

AUTUMN

The autumn sky holds me
as the sun sinks low.
The trees talk to each other
about the oncoming snow.
And twilight on the river dances
as summertime goes.

Starr Pugh, 12
Salina Central High

The Future Vet

As a child, I had always wanted to be a vet. I had even gone as far as injecting needles into my stuffed animals. I would even pretend to operate, and slit their stomachs open until all the stuffing came out and made a mess. Well, my mother didn't appreciate this at all. But, the last straw came, when I started operating on my friend.' stuffed animals. The mothers would phone my mom and demand that their children's toys be replaced.

Finally, I was forbidden to practice my operating skills on any more defenseless animals. I got so bored, I couldn't stand it. Then I came up with an idea. I would learn about the habits of the cat! I had the perfect specimen, too. The old neighborhood tomcat, Arthur.

I searched and searched for him. Finally I hunted him down. He was sunning on Miss Emerson's back porch. She was a tiny old lady who always fed Arthur. I was watching from a distance, and was beginning to think Arthur was going to sleep all day. But, then suddenly the bushes moved. Arthur opened one eye and his ears began to twitch. He slowly got up and crept toward the bushes. Our from the bushes jumped Luke, our neighbor's bloodhound. Now, this bloodhound, you've got to understand, wouldn't hurt a flea. You know that, and I know that, but Arthur didn't. The fur on the cat went into midair, and he began hissing at Luke. Well, poor old Luke stood there whimpering like a baby, while Arthur got madder. I could see that at any minute, that ferocious cat was going to pounce on Luke or claw the daylights out of him. Me, having a soft heart for dumb animals (or maybe confused in Luke's case) could not stand there and let this happen. I ran up between them, to get Luke out of the way, and good old Arthur attacked me instead. He dug his claws into my legs and clawed me good. Luke got scared and started to run home. Instead he ran into me and ran me into the barbed wire fence Miss Emerson had around her precious herb garden.

As I was just coming home from the hospital, where I received my tetnus shot, I saw Arthur on our porch. He actually looked like he was smiling. Well, I've had it with animals! I'm not even operating on stuffed animals any more. The only thing I'm operating is my mom's typewriter. I'm going to be a secretary.

Karen Spannenberg, 8, West Elementary (Belleville)

WHY ME, PLANTS?

Some people can just look at a plant, and it will automatically grow. I mist, water, feed, praise, and even beg, but my plants just shrivel up and die. Once after a long lovingly talk with my Fluffy Duffy plant, it looked as if it had a bad case of dandruff. My plants really must hate me, because my Artilley Plant has fizzled out, my Pray Plant looks like it needs to go to confession, and my African Violet looks as though the Rwadana Tribe has done a war dance on it. All my plants blame me for giving the Antarctica Plant frost bite. How was I to know it didn't belong in the freezer? I gave my plants the best years of my life, and this is the thanks I get: brown leaves all over my room. I guess I'll go back to plastic plants; at least they can't give me dirty looks in the middle of the night.

Robyn Lawrence, 11, Pittsburg High

DISEASE

Disease
Is dark
And cruel
And cold.
It wraps
Itself around you
And strangles
The last wisp
Of life
Out of you
So you are
Exposed to
The icy
Acrimonious
Incising
Sneer
Of
Death.

Albert Yee, 7
Manhattan Junior High

MERCILESS SKIES

Once the green tree stared at
A carpeted field that lay
Before it and listened to
Music made by the small birds.

Now with outstretched arms
The naked branches reached
Upward to the orange sky,
But response there was none.

Mercilessly the blazing dome
Glazed down on all. It killed
The grasses and slowly
Cracked the bare ground.

The heat swiftly drove all
Happiness and color away.
All that once laughed . . . cried.
All that was green . . . died.

Still the clouds did not come,
Only the blistering sun and
The portrait of the outstretched arms
Pleading to the orange sky.

Lisa McKee, 12, Abilene High

Self-Realization

The wind howled fiercely through the trees, driving the rain against my window so tormentingly I wanted to damn the world. Oh, I was too hurt, too moved even to cry. My insides were whirling as loneliness and grief tore my heart unceasingly. Staring into the bleak sky I imagined the funeral. The flowers, the crying. Oh, why couldn't I cry? My heart was so torn. I yearned to cry. They would be carrying the casket outside and then to the cemetery to bury him. No, they couldn't put him underground, he was still young! Then a strength came into me, a power that reached down to the inner core of my soul. I wouldn't let them take him! Running wildly like a mad person, I raced downstairs and into the storm. I could not let them take my father. He had his life in front of him and yet he didn't. My clothes and hair became soaked as I lost track of time, not knowing how long I'd been running, running really from the truth. Blindly I continued, trying to force myself to believe that he was really gone. But I couldn't, and the mud from the rain tired me soon; clumsily, I struggled on until I fell. Unmoving, I lay there, and hugging the ground, I felt the tears streaming down my face.

Anne Zeigler, 10, Atchison High School

End of the Season

As he put on his street clothes, he looked around the empty locker room, which for the past three years, had been like a second home to him.

It was the end of the season, and his teammates had already cleaned out their lockers and gone home.

Putting on his red letter jacket, which was overladen with medals, he reflected over the past few years. They had been good years to him. He'd had his share of the glory, all the big, flattering write-ups in the newspaper, all of the special awards at sports banquets, all of the pictures that would go into the yearbook, all of the trophies. . . .

With an inward sigh, he picked up his duffel bag and walked out of the locker room.

He sauntered down the long corridor, trying to forget the painful memories . . . He could not push it out of his mind, the harder he tried, the more it came back to him. Finally he gave in, and began to relive the few minutes which had affected his life so much.

It was the State Championships, and because he was defending his title in the 400 meter freestyle for his third consecutive year, he had a burning desire to win this race, and leave his name in the record book.

The auditorium was filled to its capacity, most of them there to witness Jerry Nicholas break all records by winning State, three years in a row.

When the race began, it was much like any other race. His dive was executed perfectly, and for the first two laps, he had control over the lead. He was swimming smoothly and confidently, while his closest opponent was nearly a full body's length behind. The crowd was on his side, and he was enjoying every minute of the race.

But, at the turn of the third lap, the tide began to turn. The boy in the lane next to his, at his left, had begun to steadily creep up on him, so at the turn of the final lap, they were swimming in a close, neck to neck race.

Feeling signs of exhaustion spread over his body, Jerry had to break his pace, and set an even faster one, in order to keep up with his opponent.

The lap seemed to stretch endlessly before him, and he'd already fallen an arm's length behind. He now became oblivious to the cheering stands, and his mind received messages from his aching muscles and burning lungs. His only thought was that of winning.

His opponent seemed to swim tirelessly and effortlessly, refusing to swim in Jerry's wake.

With only yards to go, Jerry pulled himself up nearly even to his opponent.

It was a close race, with only one second on the officials stopwatch to determine winner from loser.

There his flashback ended, and he found himself at the locked doors which led to the pool.

It seemed incredible to believe that in a matter of minutes, three years of hard, dedicated work, were suddenly ended. He'd have to settle for second place, and get used to standing in the winner's shadow. Swallowing the dull aching knot in his throat, he halfheartedly squared his shoulders and walked out of the gym.

Kathy Desch, 10, Hayden High (Topeka)

SPORTS SPECTACULAR

On weekends when the week ends;
The day begins when the television
Like streetlights in the city
Glowing, gradually showing;
Things brought into light.

Yes, I'm a spectator
As I watch "Sports Spectacular"
And I speculate on the conclusion
In a prejudiced delusion
Of my favorite teams in games at home.

And few contests are found
Where beer commercials do not abound
In which arguments arise about their
Particular brand of beer.

Some people surmise that the beer tastes great,
While to others it's most important that it doesn't Make you gain a lot of weight.
It almost seems a shame that in order to break the monotony
They show you instant replays of the game.

Then the camera is focused on a man from the United Way.
He asks for donations and then this message he relays
"The United Way, it works for all of us."

I wonder which of the commercials is more seriously bought
Beer or the United Way;
Ironically, it's a sobering thought.

Ben Chase, 10, Berean Academy (Ebling)

WALTER CRONKITE

At 6:30 P.M., 100 million people are watching a man.
The man cannot see them, or hear them.
Yet at 6:58, 90 million people will say,
"Goodnight, Walter",
And that's the way it is.

Daniel J. Maxfield, 8, Manhattan Junior High

Horses

Heads held high, eyes scanning the horizion.
Over the open plains they roam,
Running swiftly and freely,
Silently standing in the early morning sun,
Ears foreward listening for the smallest sound
Sleek and beautiful, everloving freedom.

Karen Alley, 9, Junction City Junior High

THE DEFENSIVE ATTACK ON KHARKOV

I. Battlefield gray
The black outskirts of Kharkov
as the sun on a frozen countryside
rises
soldiers in tattered uniforms
have butterflies
preparing and waiting
in bloody trenches
anxious officers with haggard faces
pour over maps
and bark orders
awakening their troops from their limbo
in the shadow of a panzer mark IV
thats smells
of mud and exhaust
and burnt-out guns
manned
by shattered helmets
and frozen corpses.

II. Artillery guns
roaring
in the gray afternoon
spitting death to the Bolsheik enemy
in the streets of the former city
pulverized
as the silence that once ruled
the countryside
the assault tank
flattens the snow
like a great rolling pin
in soft flour dough
ukrainian winter
and the artillery guns
rain destruction
in the black afternoon.

David Canaday, 12, Salina Central High

Victor and Victim

The soldier returns
To the land he has fought for
Both of them have changed

Ken Fenley, 9
Liberty Junior High (Hutchinson)

The King of Solitary Sitting

I'm the king of solitary sitting,
And I sit here all day,
I'm guarding my castle, from other kings,
Who might think it easy prey.

I wear my robe and crown,
As proudly as can be,
But as for jewels and glitter,
I have none, you can see.

My country is not wealthy,
But does it really matter?
Money is not all that counts,
Love is always grander.

Anyone is welcome, anyone at all,
Red, white, green, or blue,
Tall, dark, or handsome,
Skinny, fat, or small.

You might not think me a king,
But in my dreams I am,
I'm the king of solitary sitting,
And I sit here all day,
I'm guarding my castle, from other kings,
Who might think it easy prey.

Becky Klingler, 8
Manhattan Junior High

PENDULUM

tick tock
goes the clock
on the wall
in the hall
never stops
drip drops
to the floor
starts a war
begins a strife
ends all life.

Trilla R. Lyerla, 12
Olathe Senior High

I Heard

I thought
I thought I heard the graceful skies,
the rolling stars, the soundless moon
—just the moon, perhaps, or was
it all the galaxy?
click mechanically

like a tired house settles
on its sliding foundation

my mother's knee cracking
as she shifts her weight

or an invisible clock announcing
the last long hour
of insomnia-wracked night.

Laura Jackson, 11
Salina High South

"Bill"

Bill Murphey never was thought of as being very smart. In fact, he never was on an honor roll at school. No, nobody ever paid much attention to this guy Bill. He never did participate in any sports or the band or any other school activity as far as I know. Bill knew a lot about one thing, and one thing only. That was science. In fact, he knew more about the science projects that we had to do in science than Mr. Lance, our teacher.

I never did pay much attention to Bill until he told me about some experiments he had done at home with lasers. Lasers always did fascinate me, but this was the first time I had ever had an opportunity to talk to anybody about them. We talked for about a half hour during math about different types of inert gases used in the main projection tube. After we finished, he invited me over to his house to see his workshop. It seemed that he could do just about anything in that laboratory of his. I had never seen anything so big and fancy.

There were large test tube racks to one side of the room, and an expensive vacuum pump in the corner. But the item that caught my attention first was a vast, strung-out maze of tubes and flasks lying on a large work bench. Bill walked over and turned on a large switch on the bench, and a dark blue flash ran through the maze of tubes. There was a loud buzzing sound coming from a large box located in the back of the room.

Bill had told me something crazy on the way over to his house about a theory he had come up with about skipping the time warp. He said that he had read through almost every log kept on the subject, and he said that nobody had ever tried his idea. He proposed to energize a large magnet he had constructed and put a specific light frequency through this. He said by interrupting the magnetic field with a high frequency he could actually move objects through this field into a different time period, depending upon the laser frequency.

Bill was real careful when he was working with the high voltage on the magnet. He used a long pole, and for extra safety, he used rubber gloves. I remember his saying that there was five times the power on four spots of an electric chair! This made me keep my distance, too.

Bill walked over to the table and lifted a large block of wood from it. As he removed it, a blue ray came out of a tube on the table. This ray shot right through the oval magnetic structure and created stringy sparks jumping into the air. Bill said that this was caused by a rejection between the two powers.

Bill demonstrated the time warp effect by tossing a block through the magnet. I couldn't believe it, but it didn't come out the other side! ! My mother called over to his house just about that time and wanted me to come home. That was the last time anyone saw Bill.

Bill had discovered the secret of the universe, to travel in time.

Nobody at school missed Bill. No, nobody ever paid much attention to this guy Bill . . .

Durwin Nigus, 8, Boswell Junior High (Topeka)

Moon Sounds

A cloud raises its head, dog-like,
in dim twilight
to listen to the moon
whose sound
is the clear blue hum of silence,
moss growing, cooling air.
The sound of the moon is real dogs,
howling, cloud-dogs, listening.

Crickets answer the whispering tree.
Leaves rub, twist in the air,
cricket legs rub (like bicycle bells).
Air sound is cricket legs, tree leaves,
a noiseless pitch in the air,
like lightning when you hear no thunder:
you know it's there.

Laura Jackson, 11
Salina High South

Falling Star

Crashing down to earth
Falling against the dark
Flashing hot white, then
Streaking blue silver
Making me stare
Wondering my awe
Of the gift from the heavens
Bestowed upon my eyes
No sound but that of wind
Whispering through grass
No fragrance but that
Of Fresh night dew
Watering the earth
I made no wish
Upon the falling star
For I could only
Drink in the sight
And wonder in awe

Cynthia Blixt, 12, Chapman High

TIME

Time is . . . . . .
A key to the future and a key
to the past,
A never-ending hallway with gigantic
doors
locked with the key of your mind.
You knock, bang, clamor on the doors.
When they open . . . .
There's silence.
Then the key melts away into the air
like falling stars.
You walk in, and behold your future.

Cheri Bailey, 7
Manhattan Junior High

HAIKU

An old Christmas tree
Stripped of all its glitters
Naked in the snow.

Debi Stevens, 10
Chapman High School

A FORD'S AVERAGE DAY

Starts after 10 tries
r steering is out,no brake
e lights,left
w front tire is
o flat,window stuck
p half way down,heater
won't go off in the summer,head lights stuck on bright,battery dead because
the radio and parking lights were left on,windshield wipers are broken,forgot
Prestone again,rear view mirror fell off,clock is running at the speed of one min.
every hour and a half,tilt steering wheel stays locked in the highest position,air
conditioner from the exhaust system,brakes work half the time needs to be
pulls in at their best,trunk lid will even flop open Midasized
the air when you are going down the interstate,the car today.

J. Sheldon Holstine, 8, Santa Fe Middle School (Newton)

CANDY CANES

Candy
canes
are so
looking
delicious
with red
and white stripes.
How could a
person
possibly
not try
one when
they're
so bright
and are
everyone's
delight.
Little
kids love
them be-
cause
they're
tasty and
sweet.
Not even
Santa
could
find
something
to compete
with that
kind of
treat.

Virginia Duer, 7, Manhattan Junior High

Untitled

Let me understand.
Don't let me drift through your river
Missing the current that
Will lead me to your
Hidden thoughts.

I try to reach out with my hands,
But they reach too far.
I smile to send a message,
But it is misread.

Through my errors I will learn
For I refuse to drown.

Allene Hough, 12
Salina Central High

An Evening Reflection

Riding out across the prairie . . . not a worry in the world . . . nothing to do but relax, take in the scenery, and let my mind wander. The evening wind, not yet settled down, is gusty, bending the grass over backwards. Nearing the edge of the prairie, I notice a nocturnal bird perched at the top of a cedar, silently watching over its hunting ground, waiting for its prey. The wind breaking through the trees brings the smell of cedars and other enchanting odors. The night creatures, aroused by my intrusion, cautiously scrutinize my presence from the safety of the dark and forbidding woods. Rounding the edge of the woods and nearing the banks of a small, secluded pond, I hear the frogs' incessant croaking, but as my horse and I ascend the bank, the momentarily frightened creatures hurriedly turn their backs and kerplop disgustedly into the security of the mossy water. The sky is clearing, and the stars are beginning to glow. The shining stars and the full moon gave the little pond a soft shimmer. The wind has settled down to a soft breeze which whispers through the grass and trees, lending the night a lonely sound. The woods animals are now scurrying about, each going its own way, each individual creature making its own contribution to the life of the woods. A wide-eyed owl observes my presence with a hoot and a flutter. It's too bad that I can't spend the rest of my days here with nature, just cherishing what she offers and living for today. No taxes, no traffic, no wars, none of the problems that arise in civilization. Oh, but I'm a dreamer. It could only happen in a dream. In the eyes of today's world there is no time for dreams and no place for dreamers. Only reality.

Reality! Can't people see what they're doing to themselves and to nature? Instead of trying to preserve the natural beauty of the earth, we bend, twist, and change nature to meet our own needs. We're destroying the world in an agonizing, suffering death. It's tragic that the children of today can't even imagine the full beauty the earth once had to offer. What little beauty is left is slowly disappearing under steel and concrete, and in our lust for luxuries we're pumping the insides out of the earth, burning them up, and polluting the air and water with them. We're stripping the forests to make room for shopping centers and astro-turfed stadiums, which, if we lived with nature, we wouldn't want, let alone need. Can't anyone see what we're doing to the place where we live? Our home. The earth. In nature each living thing is entitled to its fair share. But modern man sets up boundaries and makes walls so that a privileged few can deprive the underprivileged of what little is left. This isn't civilization. This is insanity. Why can't the people of this nation learn to respect the beautiful things God has given us to cherish and enjoy? How can they live with the fact that their descendents are being deprived of their right to love and behold the earth in all its beauty as it was meant for them?

Across the valley, the mournful coyote, wailing his mood to whatever will listen, echoes my despair in one long, sad howl.

Mark Finney, 10, Elk Valley High (Langton)

Leaves

Falling to the ground.

Orange and yellow colors.

Gently blow away.

Sylvia Sanders, 8
South Junior High, Lawrence